and the Panchayati Raj Institutions for development and democracy at grassroots.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and State Governments have launched this nation-wide campaign to involve young people in development and democracy at grassroots. The campaign is conceived, run and owned by the youth in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the Youth Clubs affiliated to the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), an autonomous organization of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. The campaign focuses on developing a synergy between the Gram Panchayats and the Youth Clubs in addressing social issues in the villages.

So far, three State level campaigns have been launched in Punjab, Haryana and Manipur. The State level launch is followed by campaigns at. the Division and District level and finally at Village level to be spearheaded by the Young Panchayat leaders themselves with the active assistance of Youth Club Members.

The launch in Goa is at an advanced stage of planning and preparation and is expected to be launched soon after the forthcoming elections in Goa.

Assistance to backward districts under Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana

2482. SHRITARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised a new scheme to provide assistance/grants to backward districts of the country on the lines of the existing Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme including the allocation of funds to the States;

(c) whether the State Governments of Bihar and Maharashtra have requested for inclusion of more districts; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme

approved in the current financial year is designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The existing Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY) has been subsumed into the BRGF Programme. The erstwhile districts under RSVY will receive their full allocation of Rs. 45 crore per district as per norms of RSVY. Thereafter, they will shift to the BRGF mode of funding. The State-wise list of districts covered under the BRGF is at Statement [Refer to the statement appended to the Answer to Unstarred Question 2480 (b).

(b) The objective of the BRGF programme is to bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirements that are not being adequately met through existing inflows. The programme has two components namely, a district component covering 250 districts and Special plans for Bihar and the KBK districts of Orissa. A total provision of Rs. 5000 crore has been made for the two components in the Budget of 2006-07. Out of this allocation Rs. 1250 crore has been provided in the Demand for Grants of the Ministry of Finance for the Special Plans which are dealt with by the Planning Commission. The remaining amount of Rs. 3750 crore has been placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for the District Component, covering 250 districts. The allocation of Rs. 3750 crore consists of two funding windows (a) a capacity building fund of Rs. 250 crore and (b) development grants of Rs. 3500 crore for the financial year 2006-07. The Panchayats at the village, intermediate and district level, referred to in Part IX of the Constitution will undertake planning and implementation of the programme, in keeping with the letter and spirit of Article 243 G, while the Municipalities referred to in Part IX-A will similarly plan and implement the programme in urban areas in conformity with the letter and spirit of Article 243 W, read with Article 243 ZD of the Constitution. The participatory plan prepared by each Panchayat and Municipality would be consolidated into the District Plan by the District Planning Committee constituted in accordance with the Article 243 ZD of the Constitution. The Plans made under BRGF would thus aim to integrate multiple programmes that are in operation in district concerned and therefore address backwardness through a combination of resources that flow to the district.

(c) and (d) The list of 250 districts covered by BRGF Programme is as existed in 2001. Any district subsequently carved out of these districts will be covered under the programme. However, there will be no additional allocation for the carved out districts and the allocation made for the original

district will have to be shared between two districts created from it. The Government of Bihar, had requested for inclusion of Arwal district, carved out of Jehanabad in the programme. Arwal will the covered under the programme with the proviso that the allocation made for Jehanabad district of Bihar under the BRGF will be shared between Jehanabad district and Arwal district. No official request regarding inclusion of additional Districts under BRGF programme has been received from the Government of Maharashtra.

Deviations in conduct of Panchayat Elections

2483. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI : Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Mid term Appraisal Report on the Panchayati Raj system has pointed out certain deviations in the conduct of Panchayat elections by the State Election Commissions;

(b) if so, the details of such deviations in different States, particularly in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) the measures Government propose to initiate to stop any such deviations in future?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANISHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, it is a fact that Panchayat Elections in some states including Andhra Pradesh had been delayed on account of a variety of reasons such as pending court cases, Natural calamities, law and order situation etc.

(c) The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in its judgment in Kishansing Tomar V/s. Municipal Corporation of the city of Ahmedabad and others in the case of civil appeal 5756 of 2005 regarding Municipalities/Panchayats elections have ordered that elections to Panchayats or municipalities should be held within the time-frame mandated in the Constitution. If the State Election Commission feels that it is not receiving cooperation from the State Government concerned in discharging its Constitutional obligations, it can approach the High Court in the first instance and thereafter the Supreme Court for a writ of mandamus directing the State Government concerned to provide all necessary cooperation and assistance to the State Election Commission so that it can fulfill its Constitutional mandate. The judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court has been circulated to the Panchayati Raj Secretaries of all State Governments.